

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD MEETING
Multipurpose Room, Civic Center Building, Basement Level
450 Civic Center Plaza, Richmond CA 94804
July 23, 2014
6:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS

Brant Fetter, Chair
Robin Welter
Eileen Whitty

Brenda Munoz, Vice Chair
Ray Welter
Mike Woldemar

Chair Fetter called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Brant Fetter; Vice Chair Munoz; Boardmembers Ray Welter, Robin Welter, Eileen Whitty and Michael Woldemar

Absent: None

Staff Present: Jonelyn Whales, Kieron Slaughter, Hector Lopez, and Assistant City Attorney James Atencio

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

February 26, 2014:

Boardmember Whitty requested the following revisions:

- Page 15, second to the last paragraph: "...several outside of their jurisdiction owned and operated by the schools, one at the Civic Center that was processed to the DRB, but staff feels there is a better way to process these now. Mr. Slaughter said that..."

ACTION: It was M/S/C (Whitty/Robin Welter) to approve the minutes of February 26, 2014, as amended; unanimously approved by voice vote: 5-0-1 (Ayes: Fetter, Munoz, Robin Welter, Whitty and Woldemar; Noes: None; Abstain: Ray Welter).

March 26, 2014:

ACTION: It was M/S/C (Whitty/Robin Welter) to approve the minutes of March 26, 2014; unanimously approved by voice vote: 6-0 (Ayes: Fetter, Munoz, Ray Welter, Robin Welter and Woldemar; Noes: None).

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

ACTION: It was M/S/C (Woldemar/Robin Welter) to approve the agenda; unanimously approved by voice vote: 6-0 (Ayes: Fetter, Munoz, Ray Welter, Robin Welter, Whitty and Woldemar; Noes: None).

Public Forum – No speakers

City Council Liaison Report - None

CONSENT CALENDAR:

Chair Fetter stated there are three items on the Consent Calendar and he asked if Boardmembers or the public wished to remove any items from the Consent Calendar. Boardmember Whitty requested Item 3 be removed from the Consent Calendar.

ACTION: It was M/S/C (Woldemar/Whitty) to approve the Consent Calendar consisting of Items 1 and 2; unanimously approved by voice vote: 6-0 (Ayes: Fetter, Munoz, Ray Welter, Robin Welter, Whitty and Woldemar; Noes: None).

Chair Fetter announced that any decision approved may be appealed in writing to the City Clerk within ten (10) days, or by Monday, August 4, 2014 by 5:00 p.m.

Items Approved on the Consent Calendar:

Public Hearing(s)

CC 1. PLN14-068 HILLTOP DRIVE PAVILION MODIFICATIONS

Description **(CONTINUED FROM JUNE 25, 2014)** PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER MODIFICATIONS TO THE CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL FOR A DESIGN REVIEW PERMIT TO CONSTRUCT A ±1,800 SQUARE FOOT PICNIC PAVILION STRUCTURE.

Location 4351 HILLTOP DRIVE

APN 426-330-006

Zoning SFR-3 (SINGLE-FAMILY LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL)

Owner CHURCH OF LATTER DAY SAINTS

Applicant KYLE HARRIS

Staff Contact HECTOR LOPEZ Recommendation: **WITHDRAWN FROM AGENDA**

CC 2. PLN14-136 NOVICKAS REAR DECK ADDITION

Description PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER A DESIGN REVIEW PERMIT TO CONSTRUCT A ±324 SQUARE FOOT DECK EXCEEDING 4 FEET FROM THE GROUND IN THE REAR OF AN EXISTING RESIDENCE.

Location 681 SONOMA STREET

APN 520-100-010

Zoning SFR-3 (SINGLE-FAMILY LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL)

Applicant NOVICKAS ADAM R (OWNER)

Staff Contact HECTOR LOPEZ Recommendation: **CONDITIONAL APPROVAL**

Item Removed from the Consent Calendar:

CC 3. PLN14-017 HILLTOP SPECULATIVE MIDDLE / HIGH SCHOOL

Description PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER A DESIGN REVIEW PERMIT TO CONSTRUCT A NEW SPECULATIVE MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL CONSISTING OF ±134,375 SQUARE FEET AT THE FORMER ALBERTSONS GROCERY STORE.

Location 3000 – 3050 HILLTOP MALL ROAD

APN 405-303-006, 405-303-007, 405-303-008, 405-303-009, 405-303-010

Zoning C-3 (REGIONAL COMMERCIAL)

Applicant HILLTOP COMMUNITY VENTURES, LLC (OWNER)
Staff Contact KIERON SLAUGHTER Recommendation: **CONDITIONAL APPROVAL**

Kieron Slaughter gave the staff report and brief description of a request for the design review permit. The Board previously reviewed the proposal on May 28, 2014 as a study session and the Board made several suggestions and comments on the project. Staff noted that eleven were addressed and/or implemented into the plans. He handed out a sheet that goes into more detail about the design and landscaping revisions as well as pedestrian improvements. One minor adjustment to a condition relates to Condition No. 4 which states, "The applicant shall provide permanent or temporary bleacher seating for the playing field." The applicant requests this be amended to state, "...if games to be played at the playing field." He said there could be times when the field is not used for full-fledged games or tournaments.

In addition, Mr. Slaughter stated there was a Mitigated Negative Declaration which was distributed to the Board and the public and one comment was received from EBMUD. Staff amended the language in the utility section of the MND which staff recommends be incorporated into the revised MND. Staff also distributed the MMRP (Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program) which will be implemented if the project is approved. Lastly, staff requests the Board make CEQA findings if the item is approved and adopted. He noted that applicant team is present to discuss changes and he concluded the report.

Boardmember Whitty referred to Item 8 in the design and landscaping follow-up; to add photovoltaic panels. She asked if there was a possibility that these would be added and not confirmed. Mr. Slaughter said the Board had requested to see what they look like if they were on the project. Boardmember Whitty asked if it is anticipated that panels would be installed. Mr. Slaughter said there is no tenant to date, but at some point the applicant may entertain adding solar panels on the roof which is why it is being designed to accommodate this in the future.

Mr. Slaughter also noted that staff suggested that either solar powered charging kiosks or cell phone tablet charging kiosks be added around the campus, and the applicant is prepared to show some concepts of those ideas. Staff continues to recommend approval of the project and adoption of the MND.

Boardmember Woldemar referred to the EBMUD letter and asked what changes were made as a result. Mr. Slaughter distributed a document to the Board which identifies that the MND's utility section will be amended and he believes it is simply a change of facts and figures.

Boardmember Woldemar referred to the CEQA findings handout and he asked if the five items will be incorporated into the Board's motion and record. City Attorney Atencio stated one action would be to adopt the findings and approve the MND and the second would be to approve the design review permit.

Boardmember Woldemar referred to proposed Condition No. 8; that the applicant contact engineering and the fire department to analyze the feasibility of a bulb-out at the corner of Shane Drive and Hilltop Mall Road. He wanted to add "or other pedestrian safety measures such as raised walkway or crosswalk lights." He would like to not leave it up to the engineering or fire department but require any one of these pedestrian safety measures, as these are key items.

Boardmember Woldemar then referred to Condition No. 18 which is a standard condition that writes the conditions of approval on the cover sheet of the construction documents so everybody on the job knows them. He requested including all of the mitigation measures as well. Another item that would be appropriate both for conditions of approval and mitigation

measures is not to just include them on the cover sheet and drawings, but also tell the reader to find the solution or answer to the condition and he discussed examples, which would read, “see sheet “x”, paragraph “x”.

Lastly, Boardmember Woldemar asked that the Board consider revising the words that state “consider” in the conditions and be replaced with “required”. Mr. Slaughter said if the Board feels strongly enough about the requirement of the condition staff can revise these.

Doug Giffin, Hilltop Community Ventures, LLC and Bill Bondy of Studio Bondy Architecture introduced themselves. Mr. Bondy stated Thomas Lamaco is also the project architect and may speak as well.

Mr. Giffin said he thought the last meeting was very productive and they were able to take comments back and make changes to the project. He thanked Mr. Slaughter for his assistance in scheduling the project and said they are seeking the Board’s approval of the project.

Bill Bondy said he was available to answer any questions but said one of their major goals is not just to build a building but to create a place for the community and he feels the work they have done in responding to comments at the last meeting went a long way in reaching their goals.

Mr. Giffin echoed Mr. Bondy’s comments and said changes made fall into two main categories: design oriented changes and pedestrian improvements. He began with pedestrian improvements stating at the last meeting it was clear there was concern in making sure kids get to school safely. They met with the City’s traffic engineer, Mr. Slaughter, the CEQA consultant and traffic consultant with a goal of creating a plan to improve the safety and to provide easy access to the site for pedestrians and they created a set of improvements to accomplish that goal.

Mr. Giffin stated they added a mid-block crosswalk across Shane Drive which will have rectangular rapid-flashing beacons (RRFB’s). They also added a feature to angle the median slightly which turns the pedestrian’s head towards on-coming traffic naturally and slows people down. Mr. Slaughter stated this is a recommendation from the City’s pedestrian master plan, as well. They also added a barrier up the median to Shane Drive to prevent jaywalking which is simply a chain link fence covered in ivy.

Boardmember Woldemar asked who would maintain the ivy, and Mr. Giffin stated he believes the median is already landscaped and irrigated. Mr. Slaughter noted it falls under the Hilltop Lighting and Landscape District as typical maintenance. Boardmember Whitty asked and confirmed the fence is 24 to 30 inches tall. Chair Fetter said wire mesh is often used instead of chain link and there are some examples found in Berkeley and samples on Geary Street in San Francisco. Mr. Bondy stated there is a product called OSO Fence which is a rectangular vinyl coated product which is similar.

Boardmember Whitty said she is sour to the idea of not putting a sidewalk along there and making everyone go to the corner down at the end or further down to get to the center. She lives one-quarter mile away from Safeway and must walk far to get to that store. Mr. Giffin stated there are no sidewalks along Hilltop in this side along the entire mileage and he pointed to where the crosswalk drops people off at to cross. Mr. Slaughter stated this was an item of discussion with Kittelson and Associates, the traffic engineers and along with the City’s traffic engineer they discussed different options, different pedestrian desire lines and they felt the best way to handle it was to use the existing diagonal crossing and put in a mid-block crossing. Boardmember Whitty recognized this and commented that it was originally poorly planned for pedestrians.

Mr. Giffin continued and said they are adding a Class II bike lane along Hilltop Drive along with shared use bike lanes down Shane Drive and through the site. They will be re-striping the crosswalks across Hilltop Mall Road at Shane Drive and adding high visibility markings along with rectangular rapid-flashing beacons there as well.

Boardmember Woldemar referred to the civil engineer plans which talk about RRFB's and he clarified with Mr. Giffin said these are the large signs on either sides of the road with yellow flashing lights. Mr. Slaughter noted that crosswalk lights were considered but they get damaged and heavily traveled over and do not stay visible over time. Boardmembers Woldemar and Whitty commented that the flashing lights work well in other areas they travel, and Mr. Slaughter noted that the RRFB's are in the master plan and said he could display what they look like from the Internet. Mr. Giffin said their traffic engineers have found that it is the eye-level component that is most effective.

Mr. Giffin continued discussing improvements, stating they will be adding new stop signs and crosswalks at both Shane Drive and Hilltop Mall Road and Garrity Way and Hilltop Mall Road. They will be reducing the radius of a corner which is the bulb-out they proposed and the plan has this reduction and simply needs engineering's approval. This provides extra space for the pedestrians to wait to cross, decreasing the path of travel and also slowing the cars as they go around the intersection. They will also be adding a bus stop and bench to provide additional capacity at the bus stop immediately adjacent to the new crosswalk.

Chair Fetter asked for the location of the Class II bike lane and Mr. Giffin stated these are on the civil sheets, and he confirmed with Mr. Slaughter that the lane ties into and is a segment of what is proposed in the City's master plan. Mr. Giffin stated it also qualifies for the safe routes to school grant and they hopefully will get funding for bike lanes all the way down Hilltop Mall Road.

Boardmember Woldemar asked Mr. Giffin point to the location of the bus stop and Mr. Giffin said AC Transit wants the crosswalk in front of the bus stop and they will take what exists as a bus bench and putting in a new shelter and adjacent bench. Boardmember Woldemar asked and confirmed that there is room for wheelchairs to get around the area and the current sidewalk.

Mr. Giffin said they have done a lot with the design since their last meeting. They have some turbo micro wind turbines in front of the campus for the architectural base, which he explained and said they are working with the contractor to pull the power into the science classrooms to provide more of a learning experience. Boardmember Woldemar likened them to the turbines in Alameda, and Mr. Bondy indicated there are some at Crissy Field, as well which are very similar.

Chair Fetter noted there are three different wind turbines at Crissy Field which are low, medium and high speed. He suggested determining what the average wind speed is there given the design. Mr. Giffin stated these are not installed for power generation and power will come from the PV panels. They like these because they are kinetic, provide a learning experience and they will spin up to a certain speed and then the bearings release. They also do not anticipate any high wind speeds.

Mr. Giffin said they also worked hard to reduce the amount of pavement and soften its appearance while expanding the landscaping and seating areas. The same measures also provide more inviting and functional areas to gather and sit around the campus.

Mr. Giffin then reviewed the following additional changes:

1. They specified lamp black in the site concrete to soften and darken the pavement.
2. They mounded the landscape areas both in and outside of the fenced area for seating and character.
3. The mounding inside the fenced area will have mowed grass whereas the mounding outside will have unmowed lawn grass.
4. The mounding around the rollup doors will be done in such a way to provide seating for an outdoor classroom.
5. They added seat walls and furniture along with the device charging stations.
6. They added reclaimed logs and log sections on site from on-site removed trees.
7. They brought in landscaping along the main campus walkways to the front entrance to make the sides meander a bit.
8. They have reduced the pavement and expanded the landscaping next to the basketball court in the rear and they reduced pavement of the fire access near the trash enclosure.
9. They have darkened the color of the main paint color on the classroom buildings.
10. They modified the paint scheme of the gym to provide contrast and identity.
11. They refined the tree rehabilitation program for on-site trees that are not to be replaced.
12. There is a specific request to change out the London Plain trees at the side of the building which has been done.
13. They added PV panels to the renderings with the intent to put them in now given financing options work out. It is 85% of the building load and they are trying to refine this now and get financing.
14. They moved to a single transformer adjacent to the trash enclosure and provided additional screening.
15. They are installing educational signage in the bio-retention areas.
16. They have changed fencing along Shane Drive to be black vinyl coated.

Mr. Giffin said they really like the front elevation of the campus with all elements bringing the concept together to make it pop. One thing that might be helpful is that renderings show landscaping is opaque and they have a couple of renderings which shows an entrance to one of the classroom buildings. He displayed entrance canopies, signature coast live oaks, grade level doors with mounded seating around it, and added seat walls that line the entranceway which helps to confine the pathway system. He presented their current concept for the device charging station and said one area good to locate them was at the edge of the play field across from the front entrance where there are benches. This takes advantage of the existing shade and seating areas. Some will be placed next to seat walls as well. He then described all seating areas throughout the site.

Boardmember Woldemar said on both sides of the playfield is a 42 inch high fence. In the southern two corners, the fence is broken with no gate and accessed directly into the gym onto the playfield. He noted the bridges going over the bio-swale areas and he confirmed there were not gates there. He proposed a condition change and suggested that on either side of the bridge there could be 8-10 feet of bench on the playfield side as one more place for kids to sit around the edge of a big green lawn. Mr. Giffin said they could add a bench here and was agreeable to the additional condition. Boardmember Robin Welter asked if benches would be better than pull out bleachers, which might be less expensive. Mr. Giffin said the field is not big enough for games but simply to practice, and he thinks this is a great idea. Mr. Bondy said if there were any small kids playing soccer there, if they locate bleachers there, there will be no room to play. With benches it leaves enough room and they agreed with this proposed condition.

Mr. Giffin referred to the fence panels and displayed the screen to show their actual color. He said they are pulling from the building colors with educational themes. He thanked the Board and staff for their time and said the process has been very valuable.

Boardmember Whitty suggested incorporating all of the revisions into conditions, and Mr. Slaughter said everything Mr. Giffin discussed is incorporated and highlighted into the plans the Board has received.

Boardmember Ray Welter referred to the mechanical screen material and asked and confirmed it is a commercial metal mechanical screen siding. He also confirmed that the storefront window and garage frames will be a clear anodized aluminum and door frames will be painted to match.

Boardmember Woldemar said this is one of the best projects he has seen in a long time and thanked the applicant team. Boardmembers concurred and echoed his comments.

The public hearing was closed.

ACTION: It was M/S/C (Woldemar/Ray Welter) to approve the Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration based on the staff's prepared five findings and to adopt the findings for PLN 14-017; unanimously approved by voice vote: 6-0 (Ayes: Fetter, Munoz, Ray Welter, Robin Welter, Whitty and Woldemar; Noes: None).

ACTION: It was M/S/C (Woldemar/Robin Welter) to adopt the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for the project and to approve the design review permit with staff's recommended 4 findings and staff's recommended 19 conditions with the following amendments to conditions: 1) that Condition No. 4 be modified to read "The applicant shall provide 12 foot long benches north and south of each of the two east and west paths into the playfield on the playfield side of the fence surrounding the playfield." 2) Amend Condition No. 5 to read "shall install" and delete the word "consider"; 3) Delete Condition No. 6; 4) to amend Condition No. 8 to read "The applicant at both the mid-block and at the Shane Drive/Hilltop Mall Road intersections or crosswalks shall provide a bulb-out, raised walkway, crosswalk lighting, or rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFBs)"; 5) Add Condition No. 18 that conditions of approval and mitigation measures be included on the cover sheet (and as needed, secondary sheets) of the documents and that words for each of the items be also added indicating to the reader where the solution to the conditions is located in the documents and that staff change this standard wording for all projects; and 6) add Condition No. 20 to indicate that the fence on Shane Drive be a minimum of at least 24 inches;" unanimously approved by voice vote: 6-0 (Ayes: Fetter, Munoz, Ray Welter, Robin Welter, Whitty and Woldemar. Noes: None).

Board Business

A. Staff reports, requests, or announcements

Chad Smalley, City of Richmond's Capital Projects Manager, reported on circulation improvements which BART has proposed for the bus inter-modal area at the Richmond BART Station, but staff from BART is not present. He said what they are proposing to do is a grant-funded project which is out to bid in the next couple of weeks that will re-orient bus circulation in that area in front of the inter-modal transit station to broaden the area that the buses trigger because there is no longer a need for surface parking in that lot. To date, people tend to come out of the station and walk across to the stops in the center of the island for shuttles and other

buses, which is a safety hazard. He said BART will organize the organize the circulation in a very north/south orientation so islands will run straight north and south for taxi's, patron drop-off, and buses will be oriented at the furthest ark. It will have the same number of bus bays but spread out more with enhanced landscaping and removing surface parking. The project also includes enhancing accessibility in the inter-modal area for detectable domes to guide visually impaired people to be able to get to the bus stations easier.

Boardmember Ray Welter asked for the timeframe of the project, and Mr. Smalley said it will be out to bid and they plan to go to construction within the next three months. He noted the work will be somewhat disruptive, as experienced when the parking structure was built, but they will minimize the amount of time they have to close the full aisle.

Boardmember Ray Welter asked about the north side of the BART station. Mr. Smalley said the parking structure replaced all parking on the east side and they are in a development agreement on that parking lot; however, they first need to install a fairly extensive set of public improvements on the east side of the station to remove and replace the sloping walkway with an extension of Nevin Avenue, and build an elevator and stairway similar to the other side. The project has been hung up in federal funding issues since last year, but this area is needed for staging prior to the developer coming in. He said there is also a streetscape project that would extend from 19th Avenue all the way to the Civic Center and this is similarly held up with federal funding and Caltrans.

Boardmember Woldemar confirmed this is a BART project and requires no building permit from the City. Mr. Smalley said BART has worked with the City and traffic staff to see how the project interfaces with streets and they are happy with it, noting it is a great improvement project.

Boardmember Woldemar announced that next to the project approved tonight is the AAA Building and next to that is a new proposed project, Hilltop Apartments which is 6 stories tall on one corner, and there is a subcommittee meeting scheduled next Monday at 5:15 p.m. Boardmember Robin Welter and Vice Chair Munoz will attend, along with Boardmember Woldemar.

B. Action Item: Pass resolution that reinforces the current code that “All projects funded by the City that affect the visual environment shall be brought before the Design Review Board for review and approval.”

Ms. Whales stated there was discussion several months ago regarding this resolution which was discussed among the Board. Staff and the City Attorney's office developed the resolution and she asked that the Board consider it and adopt it. She said staff was available for questions. Ms. Whales stated staff will ensure it is distributed throughout the City and especially the Public Works Department. Chair Fetter asked that the Planning Commission be forwarded a copy of the resolution, as well.

Chair Fetter asked for any amendments to the resolution, and there were none.

ACTION: It was M/S/C (Whitty/Robin Welter) to adopt DRB Resolution 14-01 that reinforces the current code that “All projects funded by the City that affect the visual environment shall be brought before the Design Review Board for review and approval; unanimously approved by voice vote: 6-0 (Ayes: Fetter, Munoz, Ray Welter, Robin Welter, Whitty and Woldemar; Noes: None).

Boardmember Woldemar asked if there has been any more conversation among staff about changing submittal requirements in the review process, and Ms. Whales stated staff is considering this and must wait until feedback is obtained from surrounding cities.

Boardmember Woldemar asked if there could be one or more staff/Board meetings ahead of the regular DRB meetings, as this will need staff and Board input. Boardmember Woldemar asked that there be submittal requirements for types of projects, such as home additions that may not need to include lighting or landscaping plans, or a new house as another level, apartments, etc. He suggested a one or two page list be developed for the various projects which could serve as a handout at the first meeting. The one project, the Bottoms, where the ordinance requires a detailed landscape plan be submitted and was not done. Ms. Whales clarified that the Board and staff could schedule a special meeting ahead of a regular Board meeting to discuss this during the month of August or another meeting where there are no agenda items. Boardmember Whitty suggested limiting the discussion to one hour.

C. Board member reports, requests, or announcements

1. Nominate and Elect New Officers

The nominating committee of Boardmember Robin Welter, Vice Chair Munoz and Chair Fetter met and recommended Eileen Whitty as Chair and Robin Welter as Vice Chair. Both Boardmembers accepted the nomination.

ACTION: It was M/S/C (Woldemar/Ray Welter) to nominate and elect Boardmember Eileen Whitty as Chair and Boardmember Robin Welter as Vice Chair; unanimously approved by voice vote: 6-0 (Ayes: Fetter, Munoz, Ray Welter, Robin Welter, Whitty and Woldemar; Noes: None).

Adjournment:

The Board adjourned at 7:25 p.m. to the next meeting on August 13, 2014.